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BUDGET INVESTS MORE THAN \$730 MILLION IN COMMUNITY SAFETY

The 2024-25 Budget includes \$641.0 million in funding for the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, \$78.4 million in funding to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) and \$12.4 million to the Saskatchewan Firearms Office (SFO). This funding is aimed at maintaining, promoting and protecting public safety and wellbeing in Saskatchewan communities.

The ministry's budget includes approximately \$228.1 million to fund RCMP operations in the province through the Provincial Police Services Agreement and \$21.6 million for the RCMP's First Nations Policing Program. The budget also provides \$23.1 million for 160 municipal police positions, including 17 Combined Traffic Services positions funded by SGI and other public safety initiatives through the Municipal Police Grants Program.

"The 2024-25 Budget honours our ongoing funding commitments to the RCMP and our municipal police partners," Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Minister Paul Merriman said. "With the province growing, it is critical we maintain public safety in our cities and our rural communities. With our new Chief Marshal in place, we are looking forward to staffing the Saskatchewan Marshals Service to provide enhanced enforcement in rural communities and support existing police agencies across the province."

The budget includes \$7.0 million to continue implementation and hiring for the Saskatchewan Marshals Service, in anticipation of the service becoming operational in 2026.

The ministry is also dedicating \$37.0 million to the ongoing construction of the Saskatoon Remand Centre Expansion, which will provide more space to manage and provide rehabilitative programming to the provincial correctional population, improving community safety for inmates, staff and the public. The centre is expected to begin operations in 2025.

This year's budget allocates an additional \$2.1 million for enhanced enforcement across the province, including:

- \$1.0 million to expand the First Nations Community Safety Officer Pilot program;

- \$400,000 in cost-matched funding to Regina and Saskatoon, at \$200,000 each, to hire alternative response officers to mitigate public safety issues around shelters and other areas where people are experiencing homelessness; and
- \$197,000 to establish a K9 Unit, which includes the hiring of a narcotics-purpose canine to enhance the Saskatchewan Highway Patrol's capabilities in the search and seizure of illegal or illicit substances on our major roadways.

An additional \$200,000 is being provided to enhance and expand the Saskatchewan Police College to increase its intake capacity.

This year's budget also allocates \$78.4 million in funding to the SPSA to continue protecting Saskatchewan people and creating safe, strong communities.

The SPSA provides public safety services, including fire safety training, investigation, emergency planning, response, recovery and emergency communications. The SPSA operates Sask911, SaskAlert, Provincial Disaster Assistant Program, and the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre.

SPSA's 2024-25 budget includes: \$5.5 million toward the purchase of four re-purposed land-based airtanker aircraft, consisting of two Dash 8-Q400AT models and two Dash 8-Q400MRE models for an approximate cost of \$187.0 million over the next three years. The planes will replace the current fleet of land-based airtanker aircraft, which consists of four Convair 580 airplanes. Those planes, which play an important role in protecting communities from wildfire, will approach the end of their useful lifespan in 2027. Federal funding of \$16.3 million is committed to offset the cost of the aircraft through Natural Resources Canada's Fighting and Managing Wildfires in a Changing Climate Program.

Saskatchewan will increase funding to the SFO from \$8.9 million in 2023-24 to \$12.4 million in 2024-25. This increase will primarily be dedicated to facility improvements in Regina and Saskatoon and the installation of the ballistics laboratory at the SFO's headquarters in Saskatoon. The budget also supports the hiring of additional staff to ensure the SFO can effectively fulfill its mandate.

Additional highlights of the SFO's 2024-25 budget include:

- \$797,000 for the Firearms Compensation Committee, which will ensure Saskatchewan residents receive fair market value for legally obtained firearms and firearms accessories that are being expropriated by the federal government.
- \$500,000 for the SFO's Prosecutions Unit, which prosecutes administrative offences under *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* to ensure all firearms in the province are stored and used safely.



News Release

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